

ADMINISTRATIVE RECORD

1077367 - R8 SDMS

Superfund Epidemiologic Support Tasks that Could Be Undertaken by ATSDR (OSRTI draft 01/09/2008)

PURPOSE

The Superfund Program needs to conduct epidemiologic support tasks starting in 2008 to be completed in FY 2010. OSRTI believes that ATSDR could fulfill these purposes and is considering an opportunity to enter into an IAG with ATSDR to conduct these activities.

BACKGROUND

The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) has documented a significant number of asbestos-related deaths and health effects related to the Libby Asbestos NPL site and other sites where the contaminated ore was shipped around the United States for processing. Since 1999, ATSDR has initiated 10 different activities to help evaluate the potential health effects among Libby residents and populations throughout the United States who might have been exposed to the asbestos-contaminated ore found in Montana. Some of these activities include conducting environmental exposure evaluations, health statistics reviews, community screenings, and disease-specific surveillance. While these activities have been very supportive to EPA's Superfund response efforts to date, significant additional epidemiologic studies are necessary to determine the toxicity of the Libby Amphibole and to assist EPA and ATSDR with quantification of "safe" future exposure levels for both cancer and non-cancer health effects.

IMPLEMENTATION

The following are descriptions and preliminary resource estimates for epidemiologic support tasks that OSRTI is considering asking ATSDR to conduct through an IAG. In addition to the tasks below, though an IAG or some other mechanism (e.g., ATSDR appropriation), EPA would also like ATSDR to establish a longer-term epidemiological and health studies program related to exposure from the Libby Amphibole and other naturally occurring mineral fibers.

1. \$4.7 million for new epidemiologic investigation of approximately 1200 individuals in Libby, Montana including approximately 600 participants that were less than 18 years of age during the 2000/2001 ATSDR health screening project. The investigation will entail the use of improved exposure questionnaires, acquisition of new health information, follow-up medical testing (i.e., X-rays, CT scan, full pulmonary function tests, immune profiles), and analyses utilizing all available clinical and exposure information to understand critical objectives in support of an EPA baseline risk assessment. Project to start in FY 2008 and complete in 2010.

2. \$1 million for new epidemiologic investigation of the Marysville, Ohio, cohort as a follow-up to previous ATSDR-sponsored research. New exposure data has been obtained to develop a more complete estimate of all worker exposures for use in the development of the reference toxicity values. Improved health endpoints should be collected on the workers (i.e., CT scans and full pulmonary function testing) in order to obtain the most useful and robust response data possible for the reference toxicity value development. Project to start in FY 2008 and complete in 2010.
3. \$150,000 annually for 3 plus years to provide on-site technical support at EPA Region 8, including review, oversight, and technical input on the epidemiology studies and related collaborative efforts with the Center for Asbestos Related Disease (CARD) clinic in Libby as well as several other government and academic institutions. Project to start in FY 2008 and complete in 2010.
4. \$1 million (rough estimate only) to receive priority epidemiological and health assessment support from ATSDR to address health implications of erionite exposures in North Dakota. Over the past few decades, gravel pits have been excavated in western North Dakota where naturally occurring deposits of erionite are found. The gravel was used to surface local county roads, parking lots and other areas. In 2006, the North Dakota Department of Health learned of the potential health effects of erionite and its occurrence in North Dakota. EPA is assisting North Dakota with further assessment of the health implications of erionite exposure. With FY 2008 obligation, EPA is requesting that ATSDR conduct a health assessment to determine if health impacts are occurring or are likely to occurring in the future. If health impacts are reasonably possible, ATSDR should conduct research to determine the exposure and toxicity relationship for erionite using, as appropriate, new and historic information from the Turkey cohorts. Project to start in FY 2008, completion date not determined.